of invitation to the Chairman of a NGO - "Friends of Tribal Society" - to address the gathering. The recommendations of the Group of experts were withdrawn from the agenda items for discussion. The invitation to the Chairman of the NGO was also withdrawn.

Strike by College and University Teachers

718. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the recent country-wide ceasework by college and university teachers;

(b) the assurances given on behalf of Government on the basis of which the strike has been called off; and

(c) whether any progress has been made subsequent to resumption of work by the teachers, towards resolving the outstanding issues agitating them?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) The major reasons were that the teachers we demanding higher pay scales and better service conditions than those recommended by the Pay Review Committee appointed by the UGC.

(b) and (c) Based on the discussion and consultation with teachers' representatives, the Government have already notified the pay scales and service conditions; and the teachers have resumed work. The notified pay-scales includes upgradation in some scales and improvement in the service conditions as recommended by the Pay Review Committee.

New schemes to spread education among women

719. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new scheme for spread of education amongst girls has been launched for providing books for education of girls;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme, indicating the targeted strata of the girls under the scheme, and allocation thereunder for Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and other States and Union Territories for the current year; and

(c) the steps taken so far to implement the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) No such scheme has, so far, been launched.

Tercentenary of the Creation of Khalsa

720. SHRI KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the outlay earmarked for participation in the tercentenary of the creation of Khalsa;

(b) the concrete programmes visualised for suitable celebrations; and

(c) whether the repertory contain any programmes of permanent nature and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) The National Committee for celebrations of the Tercentenary of the founding of Khalsa met under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister on November 5, 1998. After the deliberations it was decided to set up an Implementation Committee under the chairmanship of the Union Minister for Human Resource Development to finalise the specific programmes and activities. In that meeting the Prime Minister announced that the Govt. of India would contribute Rs. 100 crores for the celebrations all over the country.

Objectives of National Book Trust

721. SHRI KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by National Book Trust during 1997-98 to foster book-mindedness, in view of the reading habits being dismal in the country;

(b) whether fostering book-mindedness is an important objective for which National